

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 00049 130538Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 L-03 DPW-01 HA-05 H-01 PM-05  
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00  
AID-05 IGA-02 /077 W  
-----003537 130550Z /15

R 120915Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8893

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0049

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDIP PINS MILI SHUM PFOR CASC LA US  
SUBJECT: MIA'S IN LPDR

REF: A STATE 2567, B 77 VIENTIANE 1105

1. IN AN EFFORT TO COMPLY WITH DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTION THAT WE NOT LINK THE MIA QUESTION WITH OUR POSSIBLE DISASTER RELIEF RESPONSE TO THE LAO FOOD APPEAL (REF A PARA 3), THE ACTING DCM CAPHED ON MFA DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AND PACIFIC NATIONS SOMBAT CHOUN-LAMANY JANUARY 11 TO DELIVER THE MIA FILES WHILE THE CHARGE SEPARATELY CALLED ON MFA CHIEF DE CABINET SOUBANH SRITHIRATH TO DISCUSS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOOD AID (SEPTTEL).

2. THE ACTING DCM HANDED THE FILES OVER TO SOMBAT AND ASKED THAT THE LAO USE THE PROVIDED INFORMATION TO FACILITATE THEIR SEARCH FOR US MIA'S. SHE MENTIONED TO SOMBAT THAT PREVIOUS US DELEGATIONS HAD DISCUSSED THE MIA QUESTION WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND THAT COUNTRY DIRECTOR BROWN HAD GIVEN SOMBAT SIMILAR FILES IN JULY 1977. SHE REMINDED SOMBAT THAT HE HAD TOLD BROWN AT THAT TIME THAT THE LAO WERE IN THE PROCESS OF LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON US MIA'S BUT HAD NOT YET PULLED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENTI 00049 130538Z

TOGETHER A REPORT (REF B). SHE THEN ASKED SOMBAT IF, SINCE THEN, THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO COMPILE ANY INFORMATION ON US MIA'S. SOMBAT REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO INFORMATION AT THE PRESENT. HE SAID THAT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT A SEARCH IN REMOTE MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS AND THAT MOST OF THE LAO PEOPLE WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH DRY SEASON PLANTING BECAUSE OF THE POOR CROP

CAUSED BY A DROUGHT. AFTER ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IMPROVE, SOMBAT SAID, THEN MAYBE THE LAO COULD SEARCH FOR US MIA'S.

3. THE ACTING DCM SAID THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WAS A SERIOUS CROP SHORTFALL THIS YEAR BECAUSE WE HAD RECEIVED THE LPDR APPEAL FOR EMERGENCY FOOD AID. SHE ADDED THAT OUR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON MIA'S WAS NOT LINKED TO ANY POSSIBLE US RESPONSE THE LAO FOOD AID APPEAL. SOMBAT ASKED IF SHE THOUGHT THE US WOULD GIVE FOOD AID TO LAOS THIS YEAR. THE ACTING DCM EXPLAINED THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS BEING EXAMINED BUT THAT THERE WERE SOME PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY WITH CONGRESS. SOMBAT THEN ASKED WHY PRESIDENT CARTER DID NOT CALL FOR A RE-ELECTION IF HE COULD NOT GET HIS POLICIES THROUGH CONGRESS. SOMBAT WAS TOLD THAT THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM WAS NOT THE SAME AS THE BRITISH. HE THEN RECEIVED A BRIEF, BASIC CIVICS LECTURE.

4. THE ACTING DCM ADDED THAT NOT ALL OF THE US CONGRESSMEN WERE OPPOSED TO AID TO LAOS BUT THAT THERE WAS A SUBSTANTIAL BLOC THAT HAD SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IN KAMPUCHEA, VIETNAM, AND LAOS. SOMBAT COUNTERED BY SAYING THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN LAOS WAS A GOOD DEAL BETTER THAN IN THE US BECAUSE AMERICAN BLACKS, WOMEN, AND ETHNIC ASIANS DID  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENTI 00049 130538Z

NOT HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. SOMBAT WAS TOLD THAT, UNDER US LAWS, THESE GROUPS DID INDEED HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS AND OFFERED THE PERSONNEL STAFFING OF THE VIENTIANE EMBASSY AND ANDREW YOUNG AS EXAMPLES. HE ACCEPTED THESE EXAMPLES BUT CLAIMED THAT IT WAS TOKENISM. SENSING THE CONVERSATION HAD REACHED AN IMPASSE, THE ACTING DCM ENCOURAGED SOMBAT TO COME TO THE US ON ONE OF THE NEXT LPDR DELEGATIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS SO THAT HE COULD WITNESS THE AMERICAN SYSTEM FIRST HAND.

5. COMMENT: CONGRESSMAN G. V. MONTGOMERY'S NEWS RELEASE OF DECEMBER 20, 1977, WHICH WE RECEIVED JANUARY 12, 1978, REPORTED THAT VIETNAMESE IDENTIFICATION TEAMS WOULD VISIT THE U.S. CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY IN HAWAII IN MARCH 1978. CONGRESSMAN MONTGOMERY SAID THAT THE LAO HAD NOT YET PROVIDED INFORMATION ON US MIA'S IN LAOS AND STATED "IF THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO SEND IDENTIFICATION TEAMS TO OUR CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY AS THE VIETNAMESE ARE GOING TO DBO, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY EVEN LARGER NUMBERS OF REMAINS COULD BE RECOVERED FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA.50

6. IF INDEED LAO TEAMS ARE INVITED TO VISIT THE  
LABORATORY IN HAWAII, PRESUMABLY AT USG EXPENSE, WE  
SUGGEST THE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE US TO DELIVER A FORMAL  
INVITATION. WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT SUCH A VISIT  
WOULD PRODUCE ANY REAL, CONCRETE BENEFITS, BUT THE  
INVITATION WOULD KEEP THE MIA DIALOGUE GOING AND WOULD  
SHOW OUR CONTINUED INTEREST. THE EMBASSY WOULD  
APPRECIATE RECEIVING APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS.  
ROBERTS

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MIA  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978VIENTI00049  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780019-0998  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** VIENTIANE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780170/aaaacgzq.tel  
**Line Count:** 125  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** f240fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 10 jun 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3785202  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MIA'S IN LPDR  
**TAGS:** PDIP, PINS, MILI, SHUM, PFOR, CASC, LA, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/f240fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014